

Bersih 2.0 slams Terengganu Umno for 'dirty politics', putting party over state
Malaysian Insider
May 14, 2014

The political chaos and turmoil in Terengganu stinks of dirty politics and shows that Umno's interests has taken precedence over governance, said a polls watchdog today.

The Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih 2.0) said politicians should remember holding public office was not for personal benefit but for the people.

"Politicians should remember they have a responsibility to the public who voted them into office," the committee said in a statement.

"Bersih 2.0 urges the public to blow the whistle on any attempt to buy or sell political affiliation with monetary gain, especially using public funds or other concessions."

"Corruption of such order will definitely destroy the country," the committee said.

The Bersih 2.0 steering committee said the Terengganu Menteri Besar should seek royal consent to dissolve the state legislative assembly.

"It is only logical that when a government's mandate is in doubt, the government should return to the ballot box to earn its right to govern.

"In this manner, the state government will have a strong mandate to administer the state," the committee said.

"Bersih 2.0 disagrees with suggestions that the Palace may summon lawmakers to determine whether the government still enjoys the confidence of the majority.

"This will drag the constitutional monarch into partisan politics and tarnish its image of being above the fray."

Bersih 2.0 said this was what occurred in the Perak Constitutional Crisis in 2009, adding Malaysia would never become a mature democracy if it continued to ignore lessons of the past.

"Malaysia will not advance if it does not take the decisive step to break the chain of dirty politics by exposing the actors to public condemnation."

The watchdog also noted that the speedy resolution of the turmoil in Terengganu lent credence to predictions by a former editor that the crisis could be resolved if the "price was right".

In a blog posting yesterday, former New Straits Times group editor-in-chief Datuk A. Kadir Jasin said the three Umno state assemblymen turned independent candidates could change their minds.

"This is just the early stages, politicians can change their minds freely if the price is right. It is often said that trustworthy politicians do not exist anymore," Kadir wrote.

Datuk Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman's appointment as Terengganu's menteri besar on Monday night sparked into a state-wide crisis for the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition.

Former menteri besar and Kijal assemblyman Datuk Seri Ahmad Said and Ajil assemblyman Ghazali Taib announced their resignation from Umno and declared themselves as independent representatives.

This led to Bukit Besi assemblyman Roslee Daud announcing yesterday morning his resignation from Umno and becoming an independent representative as well.

However, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim announced last night that Roslee had retracted his decision.

Today at the Prime Minister's Office in Putrajaya, Terengganu Umno secretary Datuk Tengku Putera Tengku Awang said the issues plaguing the state had been resolved.

Ahmad Said had apparently had a conversation with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and expressed regret over his decision to leave the party.

Tengku Putera said all the BN assemblymen in Terengganu were now firmly united in administering the state. – May 14, 2014.

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